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Agenda item 64

Reduction of military budgets

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Carlos D. **Sorreta** (Philippines)

I. Introduction

1. The item entitled "Reduction of military budgets:

"(a) Reduction of military budgets;

"(b) Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures"

was included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly in accordance with Assembly resolutions 35/142 B of 12 December 1980 and 53/72 of 4 December 1998.

2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 17 September 1999, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.

3. At its 2nd meeting, on 23 September 1999, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on all disarmament and international security items allocated to it, namely, items 64, 65 and 67 to 85, which was held at the 3rd to 12th meetings, from 11 to 15 and from 18 to 20 October (see A/C.1/54/PV.3-12). Thematic discussions on the items were held, and draft resolutions were introduced and considered, at the 13th to 19th meetings, on 21 and 22 and from 25 to 29 October (see A/C.1/54/PV.13-19). Action on all draft resolutions was take at the 20th to 27th meetings, on 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 and 9 November (see A/C.1/54/PV.20-27).

4. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures (A/54/298);

99-33470 (E) 151199

(b) Letter dated 21 June 1999 from the Permanent Representatives of Argentina and Chile to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (A/54/139);

(c) Letter dated 5 August 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the report of the Tokyo Forum for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (A/54/205-S/1999/853).

(d) Letter dated 15 October 1999 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the communiqué of the meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, held in New York on 23 September 1999 (A/54/469-S/1999/1063).

II. Consideration of proposals

A. Reduction of military budgets

5. No proposal was submitted under sub-item (a).

B. Draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.27

6. At the 16th meeting, on 26 October, the representative of Germany, on behalf of Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uruguay, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditure" (A/C.1/54/L.27). Subsequently, Estonia, Fiji, Haiti, Papua New Guinea and Thailand joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

7. At its 21st meeting, on 1 November, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/54/L.27 without a vote (see para. 8).

III. Recommendation of the First Committee

8. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 53/72 of 4 December 1998 on objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures,

Also recalling its resolution 35/142 B of 12 December 1980, which introduced the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures, and its

resolutions 48/62 of 16 December 1993, 49/66 of 15 December 1994, 51/38 of 10 December 1996 and 52/32 of 9 December 1997, calling upon all Member States to participate in it, and its resolution 47/54 B of 9 December 1992, endorsing the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters and inviting Member States to provide relevant information to the Secretary-General regarding their implementation,

Noting that since then national reports on military expenditures and on the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters have been submitted by a number of Member States belonging to different geographic regions,

Welcoming the report of the Secretary-General[1] on ways and means to implement the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters, including, in particular, how to strengthen and broaden participation in the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures,

Expressing its appreciation to the Secretary-General for providing Member States with the reports on military expenditures in standardized form reported by States and on the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters,

Welcoming the decision of many Member States to exchange and to publish information annually on their military budgets and to implement the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters, as appropriate,

Noting the efforts of several regional organizations to promote transparency of military expenditures, including standardized annual exchanges of relevant information among their member States,

Reaffirming its firm conviction that a better flow of objective information on military matters can help to relieve international tension and contribute to the building of confidence among States and to the conclusion of concrete disarmament agreements,

Convinced that the improvement of international relations forms a sound basis for promoting further openness and transparency in all military matters,

Recalling that the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters recommended certain areas for further consideration, such as the improvement of the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures,

1. *Recommends* the guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters to all Member States for implementation, fully taking into account specific political, military and other conditions prevailing in a region, on the basis of initiatives and with the agreement of the States of the region concerned;

2. *Welcomes* the continuation by the Secretary-General of consultations with relevant international bodies with a view to ascertaining the requirements for adjusting the present instrument to encourage wider participation;

3. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Secretary-General for providing Member States with a report[1] on the outcome of those consultations, as well as for his intention to organize international and regional symposia and training seminars in the coming biennium, and notes his intention to encourage, *inter alia*, the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament in Africa, in Asia and the Pacific, and in Latin America and the Caribbean to assist Member States in their regions in enhancing their knowledge of the standardized reporting system;

[1] A/54/298

4. *Calls upon* all Member States to report annually, by 30 April, to the Secretary-General their military expenditures for the latest fiscal year for which data are available, using, preferably and to the extent possible, the reporting instrument as recommended in its resolution 35/142 B or, as appropriate, any other format developed in conjunction with similar reporting on military expenditures to other international or regional organizations;

5. *Encourages* relevant international bodies and regional organizations to promote transparency of military expenditures and to enhance complementarity among reporting systems, taking into account the particular characteristics of each region, and to consider the possibility of an exchange of information with the United Nations;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

(*a*) To continue the practice of sending an annual note verbale to Member States requesting the submission of data to the reporting system, together with the reporting format and related instructions, and to publish in a timely fashion in appropriate United Nations media the due date for transmitting data on military expenditures;

(*b*) To promote international and regional symposia and training seminars to explain the purpose of the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures and to give relevant technical instructions;

(*c*) To circulate annually the reports on military expenditures as received from Member States;

7. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue consultations with relevant international bodies, within existing resources, with a view to ascertaining the requirements for adjusting the present instrument to encourage wider participation, with emphasis on examining possibilities for enhancing complementarity among international and regional reporting systems, and to exchange related information with those bodies;

8. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to make recommendations, based on the outcome of those consultations and taking into account the views of Member States, on necessary changes to the content and structure of the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures in order to strengthen and broaden participation, and to submit a report on the subject to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session;

9. *Calls upon* all Member States, in time for the deliberation by the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session, to provide the Secretary-General with their views on the analysis and the recommendations contained in his report[1] and with further suggestions to strengthen and broaden participation in the United Nations system for the standardized reporting of military expenditures, including necessary changes to its content and structure;

10. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-sixth session the item entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures".